

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

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INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T STATE 204191

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 388 - AUGUST 25, 1977

WARNING NOTICE SENSITIVE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED
NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS--NOT RELEASABLE TO
CONTRACTORS OR CONTRACTOR CONSULTANTS

MOSCOW, KUWAIT, SANA FOR AMBASSADORS

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

1. PALESTINIANS. THE 55-MEMBER PALESTINE CENTRAL COUNCIL
(PCC) IS SCHEDULED TO MEET IN DAMASCUS TODAY. THE PCC,
A LIAISON BODY BETWEEN THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL
(PNC) AND THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HAS NO POWERS TO
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MAKE BINDING DECISIONS, BUT IT CAN EXPRESS THE WILL OF
THE PLO. THE TWO-DAY MEETING WAS CALLED TO CLARIFY THE
PALESTINIAN STAND ON KEY ISSUES, BUT NO MAJOR CHANGES IN
POLICY ARE EXPECTED. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE PCC WILL
REFLECT DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE US HANDLING OF THE BEGIN
GOVERNMENT AND WITH THE RAPIDLY DIMINISHING PROSPECTS FOR
A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, REJECT THE IDEA OF ACCEPTING

UNSC RESOLUTION 242 EVEN WITH RESERVATIONS, AND REAFFIRM
THE 15-POINT POLITICAL PROGRAM ADOPTED BY THE LAST PNC
MEETING IN MARCH. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

2. LEBANON. ARAB SECURITY FORCE UNITS HAVE MADE AT
LEAST THIRTY ARRESTS FOLLOWING LAST SUNDAY'S DRUZE-
CHRISTIAN CLASHES IN THE SHOUF. THESE MEASURES MAY
PREVENT TEMPORARILY FURTHER OUTBREAKS OF SECTARIAN
FIGHTING IN THAT AREA. NEVERTHELESS, THE DRUZE ATTACK
ON A CHRISTIAN CHURCH HAS HEIGHTENED INTERCOMMUNAL
ANIMOSITIES WHICH WILL BE FELT THROUGHOUT LEBANON,
INCLUDING IN THE RANKS OF THE NASCENT ARMY. MOREOVER,
CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THE ASF WAS NOT RESPONSIVE, REFLECTING
THE GROWING CHRISTIAN DISLIKE FOR THE ASF, WHICH IS
BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE
STALEMATED LEBANESE SITUATION. (CONFIDENTIAL)

3. LIBYA-EGYPT. A CLANDESTINE REPORT FROM A USUALLY
RELIABLE SOURCE REAFFIRMS OUR VIEW THAT QADHAFI'S
HOSTILITY TOWARD THE SADAT REGIME HAS NOT ABATED. HE
HAS REPORTEDLY TOLD VISITING PALESTINIAN OFFICIALS
RECENTLY THAT THEY MUST COOPERATE WITH LIBYA IN FOMENTING
INTERNAL PROBLEMS FOR SADAT, OR ELSE FACE THE PROSPECT
OF LOSING LIBYAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT. MEANWHILE, EGYPT
AND LIBYA YESTERDAY REPORTEDLY EXCHANGED AT THE BORDER
SOME PRISONERS TAKEN IN THE JULY FIGHTING IN AN
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APPARENT EFFORT TO DEFUSE AT LEAST THE PUBLIC ASPECT OF
THEIR RUNNING FEUD. (SECRET/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)

4. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM A NEWLY PUBLISHED INR
STUDY ENTITLED "ISRAEL: THE ROLE OF AGUDAT ISRAEL IN
THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT." THE FULL TEXT WILL BE
TRANSMITTED THROUGH NORMAL POUCH CHANNELS.

5. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY, THE
ULTRA-ORTHODOX AGUDAT ISRAEL ("COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL")
IS PARTICIPATING IN ISRAEL'S GOVERNING COALITION. THE
AGUDAT'S DECISION TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT OF PRIME
MINISTER BEGIN DERIVES PRINCIPALLY FROM ITS PERCEPTION
THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE
AMENABLE TO TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS DEMANDS THAN ANY OF ITS
PREDECESSORS.

6. NOT ONLY IS MENAHEM BEGIN ISRAEL'S FIRST RELIGIOUS
PRIME MINISTER, BUT BEGIN'S COALITION IS SINGULARLY
DEPENDENT UPON THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES, WHICH PROVIDE 17
OF THE 64 VOTES THAT HIS COALITION COMMANDS IN THE
120-MEMBER KNESSET. AGUDAT ISRAEL ALONE, WITH ITS FOUR

SEATS, THUS CAN DEPRIVE THE GOVERNMENT OF ITS MAJORITY.
MOREOVER, BEGIN HAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO RELIANCE ON THE
RELIGIOUS PARTIES FOR HIS CONTINUATION IN OFFICE. HE
WOULD NOT REGARD THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE (DMC)

AS AN ACCEPTABLE

SUBSTITUTE FOR THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES,
IN VIEW OF HIS SHARP DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE DMC OVER
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLEMENTS AND OTHER KEY POLICY
ISSUES.

7. THE AGUDAT'S SUPPORT FOR BEGIN'S GOVERNMENT IS
DEPENDENT ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH BEGIN MEETS HIS
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COMMITMENTS TO THE PARTY. THE DECISION ON CONTINUED
SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE MADE IN DUE COURSE
BY THE AGUDAT'S LEADERSHIP, THE COUNCIL OF TORAH SAGES.
IN THE PAST, AGUDAT ISRAEL HAS DECLINED TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE GOVERNMENT (EXCEPT DURING ISRAEL'S EARLIEST YEARS,
1948-52) BECAUSE THE COUNCIL RULED THAT THE PARTY COULD
NOT ACCEPT COLLECTIVE MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR
GOVERNMENT ACTIONS THAT VIOLATED HALAKAH (RELIGIOUS LAW),
SUCH AS EL AL FLIGHTS ON THE SABBATH. IN RETURN FOR THE
AGUDAT'S SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN THE KNESSET, BEGIN
HAS GIVEN THE PARTY POLITICAL PLUMS--TWO IMPORTANT
KNESSET COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS, AS WELL AS A KNESSET
DEPUTY SPEAKERSHIP--THAT ARE DISPROPORTIONATE TO ITS
ACTUAL KNESSET STRENGTH. (SECRET/NOFORN) CHRISTOPHER

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